

CANTON PARK COMMISSION

BOARD MINUTES

AUGUST, 2012

The Canton Board of Park Commissioners met in regular session on Wednesday, August 8, 2012 at the Garden Center Building.

Present were; Mr. Andy Black, President; Mr. Wuyanbu Zutali, Vice President; Mr. Terry Prater, Member; and Mr. Douglas V. Perry, Director/Secretary. There were also several attendees at the meeting.

The meeting was called to order at 4:01 P.M.

The first item of business was the reading of the minutes of the July 11, 2012 regular meeting. A motion was made by A. Black to approve them as written. A second was provided by W. Zutali, and the motion then passed by unanimous vote.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Old Riverside Park Issues – The Director reported that he had received a copy of an email that seemed to say that the conversion may soon be approved by the National Park Service. Mr. Burns of the Law Department will try to get clarification and provide anything else they may need. So hopefully the conclusion of this issue will be soon. The issue remained tabled.
2. Recycle/Ad Proposal – Mr. Gordon stated the bins were still being worked on. The issue remained tabled.
3. Possible transfer of Crenshaw Park Property to SARTA – The property was currently in the process of being transferred to SARTA. The issue remained tabled.
4. Staffing and Personnel Issues – Mr. Black stated he was still strongly in favor of bringing back Mr. Foltz and Ms. Vincent. He asked if the other members had any change of opinion? Mr. Prater stated he did not but, he would like to know what the hold up was all about. In addition he was now concerned about the effort to disband the Park Commission. Mr. Black made a motion to take whatever action was necessary to appoint these two people as fiduciary employees. A second was provided by W. Zutali. The motion failed by the following vote. Mr. Black – Yes, Mr. Zutali – No, Mr. Prater – No.
5. Adopt-A-Park Proposal – The Director reported that no meeting had been arranged with the union as yet. He explained that besides being in the middle of summer, HOF time, short staffed, and with the distraction of the effort to disband the Board he had just not had the time. He hoped to get a meeting set up in the future and hopefully the program could roll out next spring. Mr. Zutali stated he would like to be a part of the talks. Mr. Black stated he liked programs like these.


NEW BUSINESS:

1. Mayor Healy's proposal to disband the Park Commission – Mr. Black asked the Director if anyone had contacted him about any conversion plan should this proposal pass in council? The Director said that no one had contacted him. Mr. Black said it is clear there is no plan. Mr. Morris stated the plan was to disband the Park Commission, eliminate the Director position, and roll the operations under the division of Public Service. Other than that no questions were answered. Mr. Morris said that he believed any savings would be lost in other issues related to such a plan. He believes in the combining of the Parks and Recreation functions by not this way. Mr. Black said that it sounds good to combine the departments but the real aim is to remove the 1,000,000 park budget from the general fund. Mr. Morris stated he believed that if it was done right 1.8 million could be saved from the general fund but, to do it right would be by letting the voters decide. Mr. Black asked if the park system were to be rolled under the street department who would manage the parks? If someone would have to be hired there would be no savings. Mr. Morris said what was needed was a plan for any of this to happen. Mr. Black agreed saying that you should not blow it up and hope it all works out. Mr. Leon Cote stated he thought the best endorsement to keep the Park Board came from Service Director Price when he said what a great job the park staff does with so little. Mr Cote agreed and stated – why change it? Mr. Dick Drake stated that there is a difference between Park and Recreation functions and he was concerned for the loss of habitat with this proposed change. He also said he was afraid the parks would end up being used for drilling. Mr. Black said it should not be easy to take park lands for any reason. Ms. Sarver asked why the proposal was being handled under the finance committee? Mr. Black stated he had asked Mr. Griffin about it being placed with the Park and Recreation Committee but it did not happen. He said he did not know how committee assignments were done. Ms. Sarver then asked why Mr. Black did not get to talk at the council caucus meeting? It was stated that Mr. Black would have had to been asked to speak at caucus. Ms. Sarver then commended Mr. Black for his speech during public speaks at the council meeting. She also stated the people do not want this to happen and hoped that council members would check with their people. In addition, Ms. Sarver said she also never heard an answer to the question of how the 100,000 was going to be saved. Mr. Cote stated he could just not see how seven people could override a vote of the people. Mr. Prater stated he believed it was a slippery slope. Mr. Cote said he had never seen a request that the Park Board did not give a fair hearing too. Mr. Zutali stated he hoped that council knew how important the Park Board is to the parks.
2. Civic Center request to use 12 sets of bleachers for a Cleveland Cavaliers game in October - The Director stated that the Board may want to consider a policy about use of park system equipment given the recent issues with bleachers for the HOF festival and now this current request. Mr. Black stated he did not see how the Board could grant this request. He said maybe if they reimburse the costs. Mr. Zutali said he did not mind doing this at this time since the program was new and maybe change for the next request. Mr. Black stated he would rather see the costs picked up by the street department. Mr. Prater stated that it was tax payer money so he does not think the Board should do this without some costs returned. Mr. Black made a motion to deny the request unless there was a reimbursement to the city in the range of 1,000 to 1,200 and an agreement from the Civic Center to cover the costs of any damage to the bleachers. A second was provided by Mr. T. Prater and the motion passed by the following vote. Mr. Black – Yes, Mr. Zutali – No, Mr. Prater – Yes.

OTHER BUSINESS:

1. Canton Marathon and Stark Parks requesting to use Schreiber Park as a starting area for a 4 mile Fall Family Fun Run that would go from there to Schneider Park in Plain Township. The runners would only be in the park from 7AM till 9 AM. They would also have a water stop in Martindale Park for the event. A motion to approve the request with an insurance requirement was made by A. Black. A second was provided by W. Zutali and the motion then passed by unanimous vote.
2. Mr. Zutali stated now that it looked like Riverside Park would soon be coming back to the Park System he would like to see what could be done about getting started on some planned improvements there. He noted that the Director had provided him one plan that had been discussed with the engineering department, park system, and the council-member.
3. Council-member Smith asked the Board if a refrigerator could be placed at shelter 3 in Crenshaw Park? The Director reviewed for the Board the fact that they had many years ago decided to remove refrigerators from the shelters and why. There was conversation about the possibility of obtaining a used one and that maybe one could be donated. The Board had no objection to trying the placement of a refrigerator in the shelter. The Director was to see about obtaining one.

Being no further business before the Board the meeting was adjourned at 4:54 P.M.



Andy Black, President



Douglas V. Perry, Director/Secretary